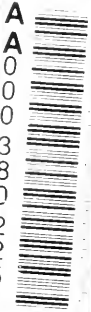


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Tennyson

Ode on the Death of the
Duke of Wellington



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ON THE DEATH OF

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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ODE
ON THE DEATH
OF THE
DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

By ALFRED TENNYSON,

POET LAUREATE.

LONDON :
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
1852.

LONDON
BRADEBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS EXTRAORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
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ODE
ON THE DEATH OF
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

I.

LET us bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
When laurel-garlanded leaders fall,
And warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

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III.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow ;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last :
Our sorrow draws but on the golden Past.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of largest influence,
Yet freest from ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew !
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er :
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V.

All is over and done :
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd ;
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds :
Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross,
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His martial wisdom kept us free ;
O warrior-seaman, this is he,
This is England's greatest son,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
And never lost an English gun ;
He that in his earlier day
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won :
And underneath another sun
Made the soldier, led him on,

And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
All their marshals' bandit swarms
Back to France with countless blows ;
Till their host of eagles flew
Past the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
He withdrew to brief repose.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings,
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,

What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,

We *have* a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of most unbounded reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;
For, saving that, ye save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And help the march of human mind,
Till crowds be sane and crowns be just ;
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Perchance our greatness will increase ;
Perchance a darkening future yields
Some reverse from worse to worse,
The blood of men in quiet fields,
And sprinkled on the sheaves of peace.
And O remember him who led your hosts ;
Respect his sacred warning ; guard your coasts :
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lower
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent—yet remember all

He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power.
His eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named,
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden

Love of self before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
He has not fail'd : he hath prevail'd :
So let the men whose hearths he saved from shame
Thro' many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue

Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
For solemn, too, this day are we.
O friends, we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
Tho' worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?

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